



SHAY TOBIN

Shay Tobin is an artist, photographer and student whose interest in mathematics and physics in the environment and natural world informs his artistic practice. Growing up as a member of the Boorooberongal clan of the Dharug Nation of Western Sydney, in a family of artists, he is influenced by connections to land, family and what it means to be living in Australia today. In 2020 Shay was the selected artist for the inaugural ACE Front Room commission. This project was developed as a new opportunity in Western Sydney for large-scale wall-work in Parramatta. Shay completed the competitive selection process including design concept, presentation, timelines and community consultation to an incredibly high standard. Through this project the artist was supported with curatorial feedback and skills development in project management including concept, budget, installation and delivery. For Shay, this was a defining moment in his practice and the first major commission project as the lead artist. In collaboration with ACE the final work Burrumatta Badu was successfully launched in 2021 attended by industry and peers.

Through his work Shay has become a role model for ACE First Nations youth collective 'Still Growing'. The collective felt a strong connection to Burrumatta Badu and invited Shay Tobin to design the 'Still Growing' Code of Conduct statement. Future collaborations with Shay include a partnership with Cement Fondu, Sydney, as part its socially-engaged exhibition program, creating dialogue, storytelling, and other creative outcomes through engagement with 'Still Growing'. As one of two lead artists on this project, Shay will collaborate with youth participants to present the exhibition in December 2022.

“My involvement with I.C.E. (now ACE) as an artist has enabled me to think about the nuts and bolts of delivering a major artistic project. Working closely with the team I felt supported to realise a large scale wall-work. The launch was such a fantastic day, it was overwhelming but truly wonderful to see everyone so happy with the artwork. I am grateful to the I.C.E. family for giving me this opportunity and I’m looking forward to connecting with the next I.C.E. project soon.”



JERRAH PATSTON

As a 19 year-old, Jerrah Patston and his family answered an ad calling for musicians for Club Weld studio for neurodiverse artists. Initially Jerrah's family and peers expected him to continue covering songs, as he had done as a busker throughout his teenage years. However the methodology and atmosphere of the studio enabled Jerrah to stretch out and create lyrics for new, collaborative compositions. After the first song-writing breakthrough, Jerrah's collaboration with Club Weld facilitator Sam Worrada gathered pace, and they created dozens of songs each year, with Jerrah freely expressing his unique, touching and humorous perspective on everyday situations. The breadth of the work was presented in a 28-song set in a sold-out show at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in November 2020.

In 2016 Jerrah's first writing and recording sessions for Club Weld were released in the compilation CD Ramp It Up (launched at The Joan, Penrith). In 2017 Jerrah's recordings were featured in Remix The House album for Vivid Live at Sydney Opera House and he appeared on ABC 702 Breakfast radio, and performed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 2018 he performed at the NOW now Festival, and in 2019 he returned to the Art Gallery of NSW to perform, and he was profiled on ABCTV 7:30. In 2020 Aria-nominated producer Chris Hamer-Smith produced Jerrah's debut album Sounds Like Rain, and Jerrah was booked for Blue Mountains Music Festival & MONA (postponed due to Covid). In 2021 Jerrah has been collaborating with Parramatta's philharmonic choir River City Voices, on a recording and performance project. And there's much more! Watch this space!!

“Coming to ICE (now ACE) is really good for me because I get to use their studio to write songs and record my music with people like Chris Hamer-Smith and Sam Worrada. Having my EP and album recorded is great because I can show it to people who might have me up to play gigs at their venues. My favourite gig so far was playing my Sounds Like Rain album launch at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub. It was sold out and I got to sign my albums for people in the audience, and I was offered more work to play in other venues after that show”.



SOL YOGA

In 2017 Sol Yoga (he/they) joined ACE's All Girl Electronic music production workshop program. Sol embraced the program and soon started to secure paid gigs and performance opportunities. Sol has remained connected with the All Girl Electronic music program which in 2019 morphed into New Age Noise. A founding member of the New Age Noise Collective (NANC), Sol developed two live events in partnership with the Electronic Music Conference Sydney (2018, 2019). In September 2020, Sol was one of four NANC musicians to collaborate with leading composer James P. Brown on a soundscape for 'The Best Party You've Never Been To', a participatory live art project led by artist Karen Therese.

Sol played at Powerhouse Lates in April 2021. He is currently an artist residence with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, and is regularly engaged as a facilitator of arts/music workshops for young people across Western Sydney. Since 2020 Sol has worked as a Radio Skid Row host/producer. He has published two articles on ACE platforms: "FKA Twigs is not to blame for the fact that Carriageworks still hates short people with cankles"* and "For me, Mardi Gras is the most violent day of the year"* . This year he spoke at Cement Fondu's Art Month Sydney event, 'Textbook for Desire'.

"I've been involved with I.C.E. (now ACE) since 2017. I started learning how to produce music at I.C.E.'s All Girl Electronic program. I had no prior art or music experience. It was the first time I was able to be creative in a relaxed environment, and I was more comfortable taking a creative class in western Sydney than in the city, since I grew up in south west Sydney.

We were encouraged to share our music and visions. I had access to funding and mentors, and through I.C.E. in collaboration with youth clubs and libraries in western and north west Sydney, I've had many contract opportunities to facilitate workshops. I.C.E. creates an environment for collaboration with people of different backgrounds yet similar understandings of western Sydney youth culture, which is difficult to obtain in city or more academic spaces. My experiences at I.C.E. have greatly contributed to my creative confidence, which would have taken a lot longer to cultivate without their support."



ANDREW UNDI LEE

Andrew Undi Lee is a Parramatta-based filmmaker from the Australian-Korean community.

In 2016, Undi was a participant in ACE's creative writing masterclasses with UK writer Courttia Newland, presented in partnership with AFTRS. In these masterclasses he presented early story concepts for *Night Bloomers*, and became a regular at ACE industry networking events.

In 2019, ACE supported Undi to run story development workshops with other young Australian-Korean creatives, developing *Night Bloomers* as an anthology of ghost stories. This cohort of Korean-Australian creatives were each working professionally in the screen industry; as vision mixers and production managers with commercial TV stations, animators; but each wanted to see their own stories on screen, with Undi taking the role of showrunner.

In early 2020, ACE facilitated the involvement of Executive Producer Michael McMahon (co-founder, Matchbox Pictures), to provide ongoing guidance to Undi and the *Night Bloomers* team. In September 2020, ACE selected Undi and producer Ashlea Ritchie to participate in the 'Creative Producing & Pitching' online workshops, a partnership with LA-based Film Independent in which US mentors and FI staff worked with 16 Australian emerging filmmakers from diverse cultural backgrounds. *Night Bloomers* was one of the standout pitches.

ACE and Michael McMahon supported Undi to make a proposal to the Australia-Korea Foundation for a grant to develop 'webtoon' (digital comics) content as proof-of-concept material for *Night Bloomers*, an innovative pathway to audience strategy. In December 2020 the project was awarded a \$40K grant.

In late 2020 – early 2021, ACE supported the production of a 'teaser' for *Night Bloomers*. The teaser was part of the application to the SBS/Screen Australia Digital Originals initiative. *Night Bloomers* is currently part of the shortlist for Digital Originals, receiving funded development support.

“Amongst the Western Suburbs and CALD communities, I.C.E (now ACE) has a strong reputation for actively engaging, championing and developing artists and approaching this undertaking with great respect. The projects we are developing together look at the migrant experience in a nuanced way and are told by authentic voices that are experienced and hungry to tell their own stories. Their support for genre story-telling, CALD and queer narratives, along with my ambitions to approach my career internationally is what makes me proud to be a part of the community I.C.E. has fostered and developed over the years.”

Beyond art therapy: the studio helping neurodiverse musicians record, release and book shows

Lo Carmen

Sat 10 Sep 2022 06.00 AEST

Sydney's Club Weld is flipping the script in an ableist industry, helping neurodiverse artists network and build skills – while putting their music front and centre

Making music has been “very special” to Nina Gotsis since she began writing songs on guitar 15 years ago. The folk musician, who also plays drums, loves both the recording process and the performances – “it’s exciting when there is a packed audience,” she says.

Gotsis has Down’s syndrome, which makes it hard for her to vocalise. Ahead of performances, she writes out what she will say in between the songs; sometimes she sings along, too.

Gotsis is one of 18 neurodiverse artists who are writing, recording and releasing music through Club Weld, a free program run by Parramatta’s Arts + Cultural Exchange (ACE) which pairs neurodiverse songwriters and musicians with established artists, who collaborate on their music and help develop their skills. Club Weld’s latest EP, *What the World Needs*, was released last week: six songs led by six neurodiverse artists, accompanied by western Sydney symphonic choir River City Voices.

Musician Sam Worrada writes and performs with Sydney band the Holy Soul and Kim Salmon – and now, through his job as a facilitator at Club Weld, with the Nina Gotsis Band. He was drawn to Club Weld as a non-therapy-based studio, which is first and foremost about the music.

“Music therapy is great, but there’s a misconception that when a musician with an intellectual disability is making something that it’s a therapeutic undertaking,” he tells the Guardian. “I went in one day in mid-2015 for a jam, loved playing with those guys, and that was that.”

The program was originally developed for people on the autism spectrum, but has broadened its remit to welcome anyone with a neurodiversity who wants to make music, including people with Down’s syndrome and brain injuries. “The facilitators have some awareness of clinical diagnoses where necessary, but the studio is very much about finding the best ways to work with individuals and make them comfortable – as any good studio would be,” Worrada says. “With a lot of musicians, there isn’t any reason to get into the clinical side of things. We just work together to find a way to give them what they need.”

The sessions are directed by the neurodiverse musicians, who work at their own pace in their own style – but they all share an “unmitigated tenacity”, Worrada says. “A lot of musicians here have had to deal with ableism; some venues act as if they’re doing you a favour by booking you. Neurodiverse musicians can also face some assumptions that they won’t need to be paid for their work, which is pretty strange.”

For this reason, he says, “a lot of people hadn’t had the opportunities to show their stuff [until Club Weld] ... it’s also been a good place for musicians to socialise, compare notes and collaborate.”

Gotsis was inspired to learn drums after seeing Backstreet Boys play live. A quick study, she caught the eye of Lindy Morrison of the Go-Betweens fame, who invited her to join the long-running Junction House Band, a melodic pop group featuring musicians with intellectual disabilities, with Morrison as musical director. Gotsis played with them for around 12 years, initially on drums and later switching to guitar after teaching herself by watching DVDs. When the group fell apart she was devastated and turned to writing her own songs on ukulele.

At Club Weld, Gotsis was able to collaborate musically again with industry professionals who could help with all aspects of music making, from writing and recording to booking shows. Her first EP *Music Colours* was released by Club Weld last year, and one of its songs, *Frozen River* – written for her mother – has been given the choral treatment by River City Voices for the *What the World Needs* EP.

Worrada cowrites with her. “Nina shows me the lyrics, strums the chords and I’ll sing until she likes how it sounds,” he explains. “It usually doesn’t take long, since the chords and words suggest the melodies.”

Toby Martin, lead singer of indie rock band Youth Group, also worked on Frozen River, which he describes as “really beautiful”. “[Gotsis’s songs] are so clear and pure and crystalline, in terms of what they’re trying to say. Nina has a way of sort of stripping everything away to its very barest kind of essence. It’s such a powerful thing,” he says.

Her next album Art Colours, out next year, takes inspiration from the natural world. “Near my house we have a forest down the road. It’s beautiful, and I sometimes write about it,” Gotsis says. One song, Lord Howe Island, is about an ocean swim. “It’s a beautiful place. We got on a boat and I sat down on the edge of it and put on a life jacket ... years later I wrote about it all in a song because it was a special time to me.”

Until then there’s the uplifting, symphonic What the World Needs, on which the Club Weld musicians are joined by the River City Choir. Aria-nominated producer Chris Hamer-Smith painstakingly mixed down hundreds of tracks from the 43 choristers – “an incredible and sometimes horrifying experience” given he’d never recorded a choir before. But he loves working with Club Weld: “The artists are coming at songwriting from a refreshing perspective and with lyrics that I would never think of but that are super cool ... there are so many good artists.”

This Sunday, those artists will meet the choir for the first time to launch the EP in Parramatta – the culmination of an intense process for the choir, who worked through logistical challenges and lockdowns while keeping each song’s writer front and centre. “It’s started many conversations around neurodiversity,” says Sarah Penicka-Smith, the artistic director of River City Voices. “I think it’s made us better at accepting each other’s little individualities.

“Programs for people living with neurodiversity or disability often get classified as art therapy, which talks more about what the artist gains from the process rather than what the audience might gain from their art,” she says. “I really hope work like this helps people to rethink that attitude”.

Club Weld’s What the World Needs is being launched at the Granville Centre, Parramatta on 11 September at 4pm.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/sep/10/club-weld-studio-helping-neurodiverse-musicians-record-release-music-book-shows-gigs>

The Guardian

‘Not calling a massacre a massacre is ridiculous’: a model of truth-telling at Myall Creek

Steve Dow

Tue 3 May 2022 03.30 AEST

Some teachers aren’t comfortable talking about Australia’s violent frontier wars. Victims’ descendants say it’s time to step up

Each year, high school teacher and artist Adele Chapman-Burgess takes her year eight class to the [Myall Creek memorial](#) in north-east New South Wales. It was here, in June 1838, that at least 28 Wirrayaraay people were killed in a massacre by white stockmen, their bodies later piled up and burned.

The students are “blown away when they see the memorial”, she says, which includes a walking trail and a large stone with a brass plaque, on which a vandal at one point scratched out the word “murdered”.

The Myall Creek murders set a judicial precedent: [seven stockmen](#) were convicted of the deaths and hanged six months later, although one free settler among the perpetrators evaded capture, living comfortably in plain sight for the rest of his life. A further four defendants walked free, after an Aboriginal eyewitness mysteriously disappeared.

The massacres that claimed thousands of Aboriginal men, women and children’s lives across Australia between 1788 and 1930 continue to be [mapped](#) by the University of Newcastle and Guardian Australia, but largely went unpunished at the time.

Speakers at a [truth-telling panel](#) on the Myall Creek massacre, hosted on Saturday by the Arts and Cultural Exchange at Parramatta, criticised an “ignorance” among many Australians about our frontier history, calling for more education of teachers and students, as well as greater Indigenous self-determination of the terms on which historical truths can be told.

Panellist Chapman-Burgess, a Ngarrabul/Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaray/Kooma woman – and a descendant of the same language group as the Wirrayaraay – called on universities to “step up” by expanding their “tokenistic” Aboriginal histories modules so that teachers can “feel comfortable talking about Aboriginal history, culture and telling the truth”.

Chapman-Burgess is a member of the national committee of the friends of Myall Creek, which includes descendants of the massacre's perpetrators, victims and survivors. Each June they meet at the site in reconciliation, to light commemorative candles and acknowledge intergenerational trauma.

Keith Munro is co-chair of the committee. He said having descendants of both sides come together each of the past 22 years sets an example for effective reconciliation. "It's not just our history, it's also your history. As 10th generation Australians, there is no separation, there is no us and them."

Saturday's panel spoke of the continuing denial that massacres took place in Australia, and the pressure to use euphemisms in the education system. Chapman-Burgess said her school executive has fielded phone calls of objection (she doesn't say from whom) asking her to avoid the word "massacre" on student permission slips to attend the memorial. "Sorry, no," she tells them, adding her school backs her up.

A Dharug panel member, Lesley Woodhouse, told the meeting: "What we are seeing in schools is kids are parroting their parents, and parents have views that are based on no education about this ... Give kids the opportunity to listen, to hear another side of the story," she said. "We don't have to keep telling them the same lie. This not calling a massacre a massacre is ridiculous."

There are plans to add an educational and memorial keeping place for artefacts at Myall Creek, provided funding can be secured. This might mean a permanent home for a 30-panel Myall Creek gathering cloak made by community artists on possum skins, which tells songline stories around water, originally created for a 2018 exhibition and currently on display at Sydney's National Art School as part of Sydney Biennale.

Another panellist, Dharug man Chris Tobin, noted that despite the plethora of cenotaphs and statues for Australians fighting overseas, there was until recent times "nothing" for Aboriginal people "who fought to defend their own country". This fact propelled a reconciliation group, of which Tobin was a part, to approach the St John of God hospital to erect a memorial at a massacre site at Richmond Hill, where a battle took place in 1795 between Dharug people and the NSW Corps. "Don't wait for the government," he said. "Bugger waiting for the government."

Memorials are "more meaningful" when put together by Aboriginal groups in consultation with community, said Dharug panellist Julie Bakari Webb. "That's our traditional right under lore and business," she said. "That's not the place of government or councils or anyone else to be able to tell us how to memorialise."

In 2017, the Uluru Statement from the Heart was released, which called for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice to parliament and a Makarrata commission "to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history".

"Governments have really struggled since the day dot to establish a genuine relationship with Aboriginal people," said Keith Munro. "The ignorance in regard to our frontier history can also be echoed in the ignorance a lot of Australians have to just simple things, like how Aboriginal funding actually works. [Most funding for Aboriginal programs] gets chewed up in administrative costs."

Whichever political party forms federal government after the 21 May election, Myall Creek committee member Kelvin Brown said it must be Indigenous people, not governments, that set the terms of reference for truth-telling. "There are stories out there that will never be known ... we will never know the true amount of those atrocities," he said, but emphasised there were more stories waiting to be uncovered, which should be reported to massacre investigators.

"Right across this nation, one end to the other, top and down, left and right, there were massacres everywhere," he said. "We all have a responsibility to talk about it ... as a nation ... discuss it, remember it, record it." <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/may/03/not-calling-a-massacre-a-massacre-is-ridiculous-a-model-of-truth-telling-at-myall-creek>

National Indigenous Times

Music festival to repair community trust in NSW Aboriginal health service

Jarred Cross

May 9, 2022

A week-long program of arts events hopes to rebuild community trust for a western NSW's Aboriginal health service following an extended period of uncertainty.

After entering special administration two years ago the Bourke Aboriginal Corporation Health Service has struggled to reconnect with local mob since regaining community control in mid 2021.

Events tailored to the areas youth and creative scene could provide the breath of collectiveness sorely needed as a first step toward rebuilding trust.

The upcoming MAYI festival hopes to do just that.

BACHS social emotional wellbeing program manager Joseph Clarke said the community needed an event to rally around.

"We were very close to being shut down," he said.

"What we needed to do was come up with a strategy to get patients, community, mob back into community controlled health care.

"It's about promotion within community to build strengths."

Mr Clarke said there was a raft of creative talent in the area rarely given any major backing for support and skill development.

The opportunity to provide this platform quickly became an obvious choice for rallying the community.

"These are therapies that have proven to work in the past," Mr Clarke said.

"Poetry writing, photography, writing music, producing, videography, live sound engineering.

"Lets all come together in harmony and promote what's good about our community."

BACHS teamed up with Western Sydney based organisation Arts and Cultural Exchange to organise the MAYI music and arts festival for Saturday May 28 with accompanying community workshops artist residencies in the days leading up.

Malyangapa Barkindji rapper Barkaa, Gomerioi hip hop star Kobie Dee and Minjungbal-Gudjinburra rapper JK-47 are among those locked in to perform.

ACE executive director Anne Loxley said it's exciting to bring ACE and BACHS together for the week, "coming together to focus on community, wellbeing and celebrating far west NSW".

"We look forward to an unforgettable celebration of the Bourke community, a spark for continued positive community engagement and artistic output and, most importantly, a call to Heal Country and community," she said.

Local businesses, additional community services and cultural Leaders from the 26 language groups in the surrounding area will join musicians and artists in Bourke for the festivities.

BACHS have maintained their focus on reintroducing culturally sensitive health services as the communities first choice.

"They will be there on hand to provide support wherever necessary," Mr Clarke said.

"That includes domestic and family violence services, drug and alcohol services, local employment agencies.

Rugby league health campaign Deadly Blues/Maroons ambassadors and NRL players have also accepted an invitation to attend.

MAYI festival is free to all Bourke, Brewarrina and Cobar residents along with 715 health check recipients state-wide.

Workshops and residencies in the lead up are free for all to attend.

<https://nit.com.au/09-05-2022/3062/music-festival-to-repair-community-trust-in-nsw-aboriginal-health-service>

Experts From:

Reflections on ‘*untitled (transcriptions of country)*’

Yamane Fayed

July 2022

To be published in 2025 by Artspace, Sydney, in Jonathan Jones, *untitled (transcriptions of country)*

I met Jonathan Jones in late 2019, when he first came to Arts & Cultural Exchange. (1) John Kirkman, our Director at the time, introduced him as one of the ‘most prominent Aboriginal artists in Australia’. I was a bit perplexed at the beginning of the meeting, as I had some preconditioned thoughts about what to expect. In the small office, Jonathan was sitting with a shy smile on his face. He proceeded to introduce himself and his big idea. It was incredible! A few months later, I would embark on a long, slow and complex engagement process.

When Jonathan described the 19th century French expedition to New Holland, as Australia was then known, I clearly remember my enthusiasm at seeing the exquisite portrayals of Aboriginal people drawn by Nicolas-Martin Petit. One portrait in particular stroke a chord with me, the detailed and realistic depiction of a young Aboriginal man, named “*Mororé, Eora man*”. Petit was one of the artists on board of the scientific expedition with Nicolas Baudin commissioned by Napoléon Bonaparte between 1800 and 1803 to discover and chart the southern coast of what was then known as “New Holland”.

...

With 11 embroiderers, each with their own personality, expertise, cultural belonging and knowledge systems, the group gradually morphed into a nucleus, becoming very interdependent, helping each other, giving advice to each other, supporting each other along the journey of numerous stitches. The embroiderers came from India, Afghanistan and South Korea, weaving their threads towards a better understanding of Aboriginal Australia. Meeting Aboriginal people and learning from them was the motivation and the vehicle for our long and slow process.

Memorable moments shaped the group as we discussed, laughed, cried and argued about various issues. The only request Jonathan ever made was his gentle suggestion to use black thread. Horrified at first, the women could not fathom how they would be able to translate all the details of the plants, the differentiation between the various leaves, shadows, sepals and petals, each stem and bud, the intricate filament and stigma, the position of the calyx and corolla or the distinct follicle and seeds. It needed colours to visibly portray it! The women were adamant but after many hours of debate, and careful consideration, we unanimously agreed to use black thread as a challenging process of embroidery.

...

At first glance the project may appear contradictory, joining high-end contemporary art and grassroots migrant communities. This contrast is key to the project's success, like a magnifying glass revealing the details of the stitches of the Embroiderers but also the storylines of the displacement of Aboriginal people, through native plants and their infinite details and the displacement of refugees and migrants with their own journeys to Australia. The interweaving of the threads reflects the complexities of the stories, the choice of black on white leaves enough space for our imaginations to wander into what it could have been, what it was and what it will be...

As Anamika said 'We believe in India that if you know how to work with suee (needle) and dhaaga (thread), you can fix any problem of your life. We believe that is the reality of life, the needle is always still, and we just roam around it as a thread.'

(3)

Such profound wisdom resonates within us and applies to what we experienced in this fabulous journey of constant learning, genuine connections and mutual respect. The collaboration reflects the resemblance of Indigenous and migrant Australians navigating their place living on unceded lands within the wider society without ever compromising on one's identity and culture.

Notes

(1) In March 2022, Information + Cultural Exchange changed its name to Arts & Cultural Exchange.

(2) Jonathan Jones – Quote from 'Embroidering Country' Panel conversation on 29th May 2021 at ACE, Parramatta.

(3) Anamika – Quote from 'Embroidering Country' Panel conversation on 29th May 2021 at ACE, Parramatta.

Testimonials

FBI Radio

"...a shining example of how when arts and community collide, they create an unstoppable force to be reckoned with.....they (ACE) have incubated and continue to nurture an enormous slew of local talent.... that will make their mark for decades to come."

ACE being awarded Sydney's FBI Radio's 2022 'SMAC of the Year' – for the individual/collective who has made the biggest contribution to Sydney's cultural fabric.

Accessible Diversity Services Initiative Limited

We have found that every project was unique, tailored to our group's needs, inclusive and highly efficient! ADSi will aim to work in partnership with ACE to engage our program participants in future experiential/immersive creative based learning which help build confidence, inclusion and connectedness.

Lucia Daluz Diaz

Team Leader Community Services

Biennale of Sydney

ACE has a very impressive and long-standing track record of producing ambitious interdisciplinary works of art, for cultural safety and creatively enabling Western Sydney's underrepresented and communities.

Barbara Moore

Chief Executive Officer

Futures in Sight

One of the most incredible programs that I have come across, not just in the past 7 years working in my current capacity, but essentially since beginning my career working alongside people with disabilities more than 35 years ago, is Arts & Cultural Exchange's Club Weld program...ACE creates communities of practice for neurodiverse citizens and fosters an environment in which each person is not segregated and treated according to their disability but where each person is valued for their creative artistry and stand equal among their musical peers...ACE has much to teach every disability organisation and employment service in Australia. Its facilitators demonstrate inclusion in practice and the results are astounding.

Donna Rhall

Partner

Jannawi Dance Clan

I am currently the Artistic Director of Jannawi Dance Clan who is a key artist at Art & Cultural Exchange. Jannawi Dance Clan is an Aboriginal dance company based in Sydney that centres on Indigenous storytelling through dance and performance... Arts & Cultural Exchange supported Jannawi in our successful application for an Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) Program grant awarded to Jannawi Dance Clan for the development of Garrigarrang Badu, a major new dance and song cycle.

Peta Strachan Artistic Director
Jannawi Dance Clan

Pelesasa Pictures

My name is Taofia Pelesasa of Pelesasa Pictures, a Western Sydney based film Production Company. I am of Tokelauan and Samoan heritage... More recently I worked with ACE as part of their 'Pacific Noir' program – a partnership between ACE and Pasifika Film Fest, with the objective of nurturing screen content by emerging creatives from Pacific communities... There is a groundswell of diverse screen culture in Western Sydney, and ACE plays a very important part of that landscape. The opportunity for emerging screen artists to access the programs, resources, spaces and equipment ACE provide in an affordable way can be the make-or-break for the creation of new work.

Taofia Pelesasa

Western Sydney University

...as Director of Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, and a member of the Western Sydney Arts Alliance, I am even more keenly aware of the contribution ACE makes not just to the diverse and underrepresented communities of Western Sydney, but to the cultural scene of Sydney as a whole. ACE continues to make unique contributions to important national conversations, as is evidenced by such recent projects as the Truth Telling panel discussion, featuring the Myall Creek Memorial Committee and ACE's Dharug Knowledge Holders...

Dolla S. Merrillees
Director Western Sydney Creative

Excerpt from Shadow Wolves, 'I.C.E. Brand Review & Customer Value Proposition' October 2021

It is also "the way I.C.E. does things" that make the organisation special and effective

The values uncovered when describing I.C.E. are closely reflected in the personification of the organisation

Created in and by Western Sydney	Welcoming and safe	Courageous - tackling hard problems and hard-to-reach groups	Experienced, wise 30s/40s/50s	Non-binary, mixed race	Passionate
Energised	Flexible and solutions oriented	Organic - change to meet the needs of the community	Encouraging	Innovative	Grounded
Driven to create best possible outcomes	Well-connected	Clever about funding - targeting groups that are prioritised	Values-driven	Determined	A warrior for Western Sydney

It is these more emotional and intangible elements that drive the strong support for and loyalty to the organisation

ACE Strategic Plan 2021- 2025

ACE acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, the Burramattagal peoples and clans of the Dharug. We honour Dharug elders, ancestors and future communities.

PURPOSE

ACE is a cultural organisation working on Dharug Country in Western Sydney. First Nations first, diversity and equity are our guiding principles.

Through creative processes, we work with marginalised communities to meet needs the system doesn't cater for. Each work unfolds as it needs to... a film, a fashion show, a call to action, an exhibition, a digital work or a haircut.

VISION

A world that embraces self-determined cultural expression.

VALUES

Culture: As an agent of collective- and self-expression and social justice

Connectivity: Collaborate deeply, connecting to and with cultural practitioners and communities

Self-determination: Ensuring individuals own their successes, control their futures and thrive

Truthfulness: To work honestly, transparently and with integrity

Fearlessness: Be brave in the decisions we make, organisation wide

GOAL 1: CREATIVITY

Create relevant, excellent, people-focussed work

- 1.1 Collaborate with high calibre artists, particularly Western Sydney artists
- 1.2 Develop working models that draw on multiple knowledge systems of the communities with whom we work
- 1.3 Tell local stories that reflect our communities and resonate universally
- 1.4 Work critically and independently, to produce projects of the highest standard
- 1.5 Focus on multiform projects and works across five pillars i) First Nations ii) Youth iii) Multicultural, migrants, refugees iv) Neurodiversity & Aged Care v) Screen

GOAL 2: CULTURAL SAFETY

Provide safe, accountable, inclusive spaces and frameworks to work within

- 2.1 Respect and value the multiple knowledge systems of the people with whom we work
- 2.2 Build lasting relationships with our communities based on deep listening and reciprocal trust
- 2.3 Prioritise cultural proficiency and accountability at every stage of every undertaking
- 2.4 Take a Human Rights-based approach in all we do, organisation-wide
- 2.5 Ensure our venue is a vibrant, safe and accessible creative hub for all people we work with

GOAL 3: AMBITION

Be bolder; be unwavering in our ambitions for our work, artists and organisation

- 3.1 Share work beyond Western Sydney; nationally and globally
- 3.2 Be unafraid to find new ways to instigate change and social justice
- 3.3 Foster independence through creative training, upskilling and connections that leads to enterprise and employment
- 3.4 Cultivate the next generation of Western Sydney artists via professional development
- 3.5 Partner with bold, extraordinary, high-profile organisations – arts and non-arts

GOAL 4: VISIBILITY

Be more outward facing to audiences and the arts industry

- 4.1 Do more to understand, connect with and attract audiences and supporters
- 4.2 Consolidate, honour and affirm our position and legacy as Western Sydney arts leaders
- 4.3 Ensure our marketing campaigns are clear, strategic and proactive
- 4.4 Enhance and maintain strong industry connections
- 4.5 Promote the true stories of Western Sydney - its extraordinary cultures and communities.

GOAL 5: VIABILITY

Strengthen our business to be the strongest and most robust version of itself

- 5.1 Diversify and build our income streams
- 5.2 Balance fiscal opportunities with strategic priorities without compromising standards and ethics
- 5.3 Build partnerships that bolster our resources and capacity
- 5.4 Constantly seek to build our human resources to best support our people and their well-being
- 5.5 Maintain strong, robust governance structures and process through rigour and best practice management.